

Message Text

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TO WHITE HOUSE PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 086325

NODIS

FOR DR. BRZEZINSKI ONLY

FOLLOWING REPEAT RABAT SENT ACTION SECSTATE 170931Z APR 77.

QUOTE: S E C R E T RABAT 2083

NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR MO XF

SUBJECT: UNDER SECRETARY HABIB'S APRIL 15 AUDIENCE WITH KING
HASSAN: PART I - MIDDLE EAST

1. KING HASSAN RECEIVED UNDER SECRETARY HABIB APRIL 15 FOR FREE AND EASY TWO-HOUR MEETING DEVOTED PRIMARILY TO MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA. ALSO PRESENT WERE PRIME MINISTER OSMAN, FOREIGN MINISTER LARAKI AND AMBASSADOR. (OSMAN AND LARAKI ACCOMPANIED UNDER SECRETARY ON KING'S PLANE TO AND FROM MARRAKECH, WHERE THEY AND ROYAL PROTOCOL DIRECTOR GENERAL MOULAY HAFID ALAQUI ALSO LUNCHEDED WITH HIM.) MIDDLE EAST PORTION OF CONVERSATION FOLLOWS.

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2. REVIEWING CURRENT U.S. THINKING AND STRATEGY ON THE MIDDLE EAST, HABIB NOTED THAT SECRETARY VANCE HAD VISITED THE AREA TO MAKE INITIAL CONTACT WITH ITS LEADERS AND NOW HAD GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR POINTS OF VIEW. PRESIDENT CARTER WAS NOW IN THE PROCESS OF MEETING MIDDLE EAST LEADERS. THE APRIL 4-5 SADAT WASHINGTON VISIT HAD BEEN VERY USEFUL. HE IMPRESSED AMERICAN LEADERS AS AN HONEST INTERLOCUTOR AND HAD

DEMONSTRATED SOME FLEXIBILITY IN HIS THINKING.

3. HABIB SAID THE U.S. WOULD WELCOME KING HASSAN'S VIEWS ON THE MANY PROBLEMS REMAINING TO BE OVERCOME. WHILE WE HAD NO PRECISE PLAN TO PROPOSE AT THIS TIME, THERE WAS NO QUESTION ABOUT U.S. DETERMINATION TO ACHIEVE PROGRESS THIS YEAR. THE PARTIES HAD REQUESTED A U.S. ROLE AND HAD SHOWN CONFIDENCE IN THE U.S.; WE WOULD TRY TO LIVE UP TO THIS CONFIDENCE.

4. REGARDING THE GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE, HABIB EXPLAINED THAT SEPTEMBER TIMING HAD AT ONE TIME BEEN ENVISAGED, BUT THAT NOW SEEMED TOO EARLY. WITH ISRAELI ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR MAY 17, A MONTH OR SIX WEEKS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO FORM A NEW GOVERNMENT, WHICH WOULD THEN NEED TIME TO EXAMINE REALISTICALLY THE OPTIONS OPEN TO ISRAEL ON THE COMPLEX ISSUES OF MIDDLE EAST PEACE. SUBSEQUENTLY, SECRETARY VANCE CONTEMPLATED ANOTHER ROUND OF VISITS TO ALL THE LEADERS OF THE AREA. UPON HIS RETURN, THE USG WOULD DETERMINE WHETHER DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PARTIES WERE NARROWING AND WHAT THE U.S. COULD DO TO HELP ACHIEVE A SETTLEMENT. WE HOPED THAT BEFORE CONVENING OF GENEVA CONFERENCE A NUMBER OF POINTS WOULD ALREADY HAVE BEEN AGREED UPON. SOLID PREPARATION BEFOREHAND WOULD HELP PREVENT THE CONFERENCE FROM DEGENERATING INTO A FUTILE DEBATE. IN VIEW OF FOREGOING, CONVENING MIGHT NOT REALISTICALLY BE POSSIBLE BEFORE OCTOBER.

5. ENUMERATING SOME OF THE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS REMAINING TO BE DEALT WITH, HABIB REFERRED TO PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION AT GENEVA, WHICH COMPLICATED BY LACK OF A UNIFORM ARAB VIEW. AMONG
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POSSIBLE VARIATIONS WHICH HAD BEEN PROPOSED WERE PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION BY AN INDEPENDENT DELEGATION, INCLUSION AS PART OF A UNIFIED ARAB DELEGATION OR THAT OF A PARTICULAR ARAB STATE.

6. HABIB MENTIONED PROBLEM OF AGREED FRONTIERS, THE NATURE OF PEACE, AND THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION AS THE PRIMARY ISSUES FOR NEGOTIATION. USG DID NOT YET SEE HOW A COMPROMISE MIGHT BE FOUND, AND WOULD WELCOME KING HASSAN'S VIEWS ON THESE AND OTHER ISSUES, IN LIGHT OF HIS IMPRESSIVE MIDDLE EAST CREDENTIALS AND CLOSE TIES WITH THE LEADERS IN QUESTION.

7. KING COMMENTED RE GOLAN THAT ASSAD WAS A STRAIGHTFORWARD, HONEST LEADER. IF HE GAVE HIS WORD, HE WOULD STICK TO IT. HOWEVER, INTERNAL SYRIAN POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS GAVE HIM NO LEEWAY ON GOLAN, WHICH HE HAD TO RECOVER OR THERE WOULD BE NO PEACE.

8. TURNING TO JERUSALEM, KING FELT THAT OPPOSING POSITIONS HAD BEEN MUCH FARTHER APART EARLIER BUT THAT NOW A COMPROMISE

APPEARED POSSIBLE. FEELINGS WERE NOT AS STRONG AS THEY HAD BEEN, AND THERE SHOULD BE SOME WAY TO GIVE ISRAEL ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL OF PART OF THE CITY, WHILE THE RELIGIOUS PARTS COULD BE PLACED UNDER INTERNATIONAL CONTROL.

9. KING INDICATED THAT IN VIEW OF SHARED INTEREST IN PROMOTING PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE HE WISHED TO DO WHAT HE COULD TO HELP THE U.S. AS PEACE EFFORTS PROCEEDED. AS ONE WAY OF HELPING, KING SAID HE WOULD CONTACT SADAT, ASSAD, HUSSEIN AND FAHD TO OBTAIN THEIR MAXIMUM AND MINIMUM POSITIONS FOR AN AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL. WHILE KING AGREED ARAB LEADERS TRUSTED THE U.S. AND DESIRED AN ACTIVE U.S. ROLE, THEY MIGHT NEVERTHELESS ON OCCASION SPEAK MORE FRANKLY WITH HIM AS A FELLOW ARAB ENJOYING CLOSE PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH THEM. KING WOULD PASS ON ARAB POSITIONS HE WOULD OBTAIN IN HOPE OF ASSISTING U.S. IN ITS ASSESSMENT, USING AMBASSADOR AS CONDUIT. HOWEVER, HE STRESSED, HE WISHED HIS ROLE TO BE KEPT HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL. HABIB EXPRESSED GRATITUDE
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FOR KING'S OFFER AND HOPED USG COULD HAVE RESULTS OF HIS EFFORTS VERY SOON. FOLLOWING U.S. DELIBERATIONS, KING SAID, HE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING IN CONFIDENCE ANY REPORTS WE COULD MAKE AVAILABLE CONCERNING EVOLUTION OF U.S. THINKING SO THAT HE COULD CONTRIBUTE IN MOST EFFECTIVE MANNER TO U.S. EFFORTS. HE SUGGESTED THAT WE PROVIDE A LIST OF SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO WHICH USG MIGHT REQUIRE ANSWERS, AND HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO ATTEMPT DISCREETLY TO OBTAIN RESPONSES. HABIB SAID WE WOULD PROVIDE SUCH A LIST THROUGH AMBASSADOR, AND WOULD ALSO KEEP KING ABREAST OF LATEST U.S. THINKING.

10. CONCERNING RABIN RESIGNATION, KING EXPRESSED OPINION THAT IT WAS A PITY THAT RABIN HAD HAD TO RESIGN FOR SUCH A MINOR REASON, AS HE HAD DEFINITELY FAVORED PEACE. REGARDING SUCCESSOR PERES, KING HAD HEARD HE NOT AS MUCH OF A HARDLINER AS HAD BEEN PORTRAYED. FRIEND OF KING, A WELL-KNOWN ISRAELI POET, CONSIDERED PERES A MODERATE, MORE IN THE RABIN MOLD THAN WERE FOREIGN-BORN ISRAELIS FROM EASTERN EUROPE AND ELSEWHERE. KING CITED GOLDA MEIR, "BORN IN MASSACHUSETTS", AS SPECIFIC EXAMPLE. NOW THAT PERES HAD ASSUMED PRIME MINISTER'S DUTIES, KING FORESAW THAT HE MIGHT BECOME EVEN MORE MODERATE.

11. HABIB AGREED WITH KING'S ASSESSMENT, NOTING HE HAD SEEN PERES PRIVATELY TWICE WITH SECRETARY DURING MIDDLE EAST TRIP. KING SAID HE PLANNED TO WRITE TO RABIN TO ASK FOR LATTER'S VIEWS ON THIS APPRAISAL OF PERES. KING ALSO NOTED REPORTS THAT ABBA EBAN MIGHT RETURN TO GOVERNMENT, WHICH WOULD BE AN ADDED MODERATING INFLUENCE. FOLLOWING THE ISRAELI ELECTIONS, KING SAID, HE WOULD TRY TO OBTAIN DIRECTLY AN UPDATE OF ISRAELI THINKING AND WOULD PASS IT ON TO UNDER SECRETARY FOR WHATEVER USE IT MIGHT SERVE.

12. HABIB HAS CLEARED THIS MESSAGE.

ANDERSON

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

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